

September 16, 2025

Ed Harrington, Chair
Commission Streamlining Task Force
San Francisco City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
Sent via electronic mail to CommissionStreamlining@sfgov.org

Re: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Citizens' Advisory Committee

Dear Chair Harrington and Task Force members;

We are writing as current and former members of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC was formed by the 2002 Charter Amendment Proposition E, which provided substantial reforms of an agency that was operating under a voter-approved rate freeze and was the subject of state legislation to due to neglect of its infrastructure. The establishment of a CAC was a key component of a strategy to win back ratepayer trust and support. The ordinance creating the CAC was adopted and its first meeting held in 2004.

The CAC has evolved over its 2 decades of existence, as has the agency it advises. In its early years, the CAC worked to oversee the agency's efforts to remake itself into a modern organization. A large focus was the establishment of an environmental justice policy, required by Proposition E, but not adopted until 2008, after significant pressure from the CAC. The CAC has continued to provide critical feedback on SFPUC programs and strategies, including the Environmental Stewardship Policy, the establishment of Clean Power SF, the introduction of groundwater supplies into the City's supply mix and the implementation of the agency's community benefits program. Members of the community, some of whom have relevant expertise and many of whom do not, contribute their time and energy to the CAC.

The SFPUC is an enormous agency with a \$2 billion. Its actions impact not just the people of San Francisco, but 2 million Bay Area residents and hundreds of thousands of acres of habitat both in the Bay area and upcountry.. It is so large that it is impossible for any 5 people to keep up and, while its communications efforts have improved, it is still difficult for members of the public to find information about programs that might be of interest. Moreover, the Commission is an extension of the PUC itself, while the CAC is allowed to be more critical of the agency and its actions, based on the viewpoint of its diverse members.

Finally, while we agree in general with term limits, the Bay Area Water Conservation and Supply Agency (BAWSCA) holds a standing seat on the CAC, which is filled by the CEO/GM of that agency. We recommend against the application of term limits for this seat.

The modest cost of maintaining the CAC is a small part of the overall external affairs budget, but it creates community goodwill and builds a group that can advocate for SFPUC policies with their local community. For these reasons, the undersigned urge you to retain the SFPUC CAC.

Sincerely,

Wendy Aragon
SFPUC CAC
Past member and Former Chair

Jennifer Clary, member
SFPUC CAC

Suki Kott
Past member SFPUC

Alex Lantsberg
SFPUC CAC
Past member and former Chair

Eli Perszyk, member
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